1507/30+15

A LEARNED TREATISE OF THE PLAGUE:

WHEREIN,

The two Queſtions: *Whether the* PLAGUE *be Infectious, or no*: And *Whether, and how farr it may be ſhunned of Chriſtians, by going aſide?* are reſolved.

Written in Latine by the famous *Theodore Beza Vezelian.*

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM
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NOV

To the Honorable Sir JOHN ROBINSON, Lieutenant of his *Majeſtie's* Principal Fortreſs, the *Tower of London.*

Honourable Sir,

THE confidence of a Stranger will (*I hope*) eaſily meet your pardon, when the worth of the Author, and the occaſional Subject of the Diſcourſe (*in theſe contagious and calamitous times*) have given me too ſad an opportunity of preſenting it to your Honour, whoſe concerns for the Publick welfare, (*even in this Great City*) are as eminently great as any others. The matter of the Diſcourſe is a Confutation, and reconciling the onely two deſtructive Opinions, that in all Ages (*in Contagious and Infectious times*) have ever proved fatal to the World: the one too much preſuming and relying upon this bold Opinion, That the PLAGUE is not Infectious: and the other, Tum pavor ſapientiam omnem mihi ex animo expectorat: out of a weak and unſpirited Precipitation, without exception, flye away from it; both of which are ſo contrarie to Humanity; that as they are utter Enemies to each other, ſo (like the diſ-agreeing Brothers) they are both in oppoſition to Chri-

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stian Community and Charity. To say more, were too great a wrong to the Judicious Beza, *and to anticipate Your Honours Judgement; To whose Noble Approbation I commend the Author; and hope from Your Noble Candour, You will easily censure this Presumption in,*

Honourable Sir,

Your Honours (though unknown)

most devoted, and most

humble Servant,

Edward Percivall.

A

LEARNED TREATISE

OF THE

PLAGUE:

Wherein the two Questions: Whether the PLAGUE be Infectious or no? *And* Whether, and how far it may be shunned of Christians, by going aside? *are resolved.*

I Confess my self to have been so unacquainted with this question, *Whether the Plague be to be reckoned amongst infectious Diseases?* that untill within these few years, I am of belief, that it was never doubted; but that this Sickness alone, amongst all others, was to be judged Contagious; for testimony whereof, before any man that is not given to quarrel, I refer my self to the judgement of * Writers of all Countries, who have treated of these things. But now in our times men have taken in hand to dispute this question upon this occasion, That many do so greatly fear this disease, and death which commonly followeth the same; that

* The Plague is judged to be infectious by all that have written of the same.

that forſaking all duties, not onely of Chriſtians, but alſo of Humanity, they have greatly increated the very wrath of God, which is the chief cauſe of this Sickneſſe: and there hath in a manner been no * ſtay or lett in them; but where this great miſery hath happened, the bonds of Man's fellowſhips being once broken, it is much to be wondered at, that all Mankinde hath not periſhed and been deſtroyed. And theſe men being demanded what they can alledge for ſo impious a crime, for that they commonly bring nothing elſe for their excuſe, but the fear of Infection, wherof it hath come to pass, that thoſe in whom there is a greater boldneſs, do think that they can no way more certainly finde a remedy for this evil, than by teaching that this Sickneſs is falſly ſuppoſed to be infectious.

* The unnatural diſcourteſie of ſome towards their Neighbors viſited with the Plague.

But I, becauſe I think that this Paradox or ſtrange opinion can no more be proved by good reaſon, then if a man with *Anaxagoras* ſhould hold the *Snow* to be *black*, or out of the Hypotheſis of *Copernicus*, labour to prove, that the *Earth* doth *really move*, and the *Sun ſtand ſtill*, as the Center of the World, do judge, that this ſo great fear, which bringeth with it a forgetfulneſs of all duty, both may, and alſo ought otherwiſe to be put away: neither will I believe this Diſeaſe not to be infectious, untill ſome man ſhall teach me, either out of the Word of God, or by evident and good reaſons to the contrary; for there are in the very courſe of Nature certain and moſt ſure grounds and proofs of this verity, ſo long as the order of neceſſary Cauſes agree with themſelves.

For I deny, although it be agreed upon, that the Plague, of all other diſeaſes, is moſt infectious; yea, and that unavoidable death for the moſt part doth preſently follow: that therefore the Standing, in which God hath placed every man, is to be forſaken. I deny, I ſay, that therefore that thing is not to be preferred before Life it ſelf, which we owe unto God, to our Country, and which we owe unto men, either for ſome publick or private reſpect. And I had much more rather they would beſtow their endeavours in perſwaſive diſputes, to reſtrain mens flying away for fear of the Plague, than that they ſhould labor to prove their ſtrange opinion of the Plague not to be contagious. Indeed, I had rather have the Conſequent (according to the School-phraſe) in that ſame Enthymeme to be denied, than the Antecedent; for by that means ſomething might be brought to paſs, not only by probable, but alſo by neceſſary Arguments, according to their own deſire; namely, That thoſe do very greatly offend, who, for fear of any peril do offend againſt God, or againſt their Neighbour. For what Chriſtian man dareth to call theſe things into controverſie? or if he dare do it, ſhall not be reproved by the teſtimony of his own Conſcience, though all the world ſhould be ſilent? For I do not think that there are

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any, which do hold, that with a good conſcience, the Plague by all means without exception is to be fled from; which notwithſtanding, I ſee by ſome in ſuch ſort diſputed againſt, as if it were by others maintained. Yet, if there be any of that minde, I do no more favour their errour, than I allow of thoſe men, which of a clean contrary opinion do think, that the Plague is not to be fled from. But ſurely it is the part of a wiſe man to follow the Golden mean, ſo that he fly not when he ſhould tarry, neither when he ſhould go aſide (for the term of flying away in this Argument ſeemeth to me to be very improper) by his raſh tarrying, offend againſt the ſelf-ſame Charity, which ſeemed to counſel him to ſtay. Theſe things I thought good in manner of a Preface to ſet down, before I come to the handling of the matter: To the end, that all men at the firſt entrance may perceive, what I have undertaken to defend, and what to diſprove. Then for as much as there are ſome not wanting, which do think that this diſcourſe of the Plague to be fled from, or not to be fled from, doth depend upon the firſt queſtion, *Whether the Plague be infectious or no?* let us examine with what reaſons and arguments they ſo boldly deny the Plague to be infectious; a thing which hitherto of all men without controverſie hath been believed.

For the better determining of this queſtion, they would have it to be conſidered what the Plague is, from whence it commeth, what is the cauſe of it, by what means it is ſent unto us, what is the nature of it, and what the end?

I take their Propoſals, for it is moſt lawful and reaſonable: But how ſhall we come to the knowledge of theſe things? By no means (ſay they) from any reaſons out of Phyſick, but only by the word of God. Then let all things diſputed by Phyſicians be blotted out; and inſtead of the Books of *Hypocrates*, *Galen*, and others, Let Phyſicians read only the Bible; and let there be no difference between them, and Divines; between the Phyſick of the body, and the minde. Nay, God forbid, will they ſay; for we condemn no other reaſons of Phyſick, than ſuch as are againſt the word of God. Let us enquire then (foraſmuch as Infection hath its beginning from Natural cauſes, and therefore proceederh from them,) whether concerning Natural cauſes of the Plague, there be any thing taught in the word of God, contrary to the Rules and Judgement of Phyſicians. They ſay that the Plague is called by the *Hebritians Dener*, of the word *Daner*, which alſo ſignifieth to deſtroy, by Sentence given by God: and that the *Grecians* do render it *Thanaton*, that is to ſay, *Death*. Be it ſo, it is not much to the matter; for hereof it followeth not, that the Plague proceedeth not of Natural cauſes coming between, becauſe it is ſent by God, unleſs that we will have therefore all Natural cauſes of Diſeaſes taken away, becauſe no man dieth, but God decreeing of what kinde and manner of death ſoever it be that

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he die. Nay, (say they) it is a folly to call the Sentence of God, whereby he appointeth unto every man, not only death it self, but also the kinde of death, and Second causes, infections. But who I pray ever doted so much as to call the Sentence it self, of God, infectious? But that which we say is far other wise, namely, That the Infection it self is to be reckoned amongst Second causes; for who can deny that many Diseases are gotten by Handling and Touching? of the which some are deadly, and other some are less dangerous; unless they will also contend that the Sun shineth not at noon day? Sinne indeed, wherewith we are all born infected, and from which all this Dying cometh, by a certain Spiritual infection, not without the Decree of God, it is conveyed and spread into all the posterity of *Adam*: therefore there is no substance at all in this Reason. But they also demand, if Infection be reckoned amongst Second causes appointed by God, how we can avoid that which is ordeined by God? that hence they might gather, that if the Plague be granted to be infectious, that in vain a Remedy is sought against it, by flying away. But this is also a very dull reason; For if this reason be good, shall it not be lawful to affirm the same of all Second causes of death? If so, Let us neither eat; nor drink, nor seek any remedy against any Diseases; let Souldiers go unarmed to Battel, because Death ordained by God cannot be avoided. But thus the Case standeth, doubtless neither Death, nor the Time, or any kinde of Death appointed by God, can be avoided: Neither do we eat, or use Remedies against Diseases, or put on armor against our Enemies, as if we meant to withstand God. But leaving those things, which God would have kept secret from us, we must use those things which God himself going before, Nature telleth us to be ordained by him to prolong our life so long as it shall please him; which if we do not, we shall worthily be deemed to tempt and most grievously to offend God; so far off is it, that using the means set down by him to avoid death, we should sinne against him, although that sometimes we use them in vain, that is to say, when as the end doth plainly shew, that even then we must die, when as we thought our life should yet for a time have been prolonged. So is *Asa* rebuked, not for that he sent for Physicians, but for that he put his hope of life in the Physicians: So that when experience hath taught us, that Infection creepeth rather into things near, than afar off; he is not to be accused, who leaving no part of Christian duty undone, withdraweth himself and his Family: Nay, he shall be greatly blamed, who rashly casteth himself and his into the danger of Infection; when as the Apostle beareth witness, he is worse than an Infidel which hath not so great care over his, as with a pious safety and charity he ought to have.

Now let us see whether this following Reason be of any more force. By those Names, say they, which in the holy Scripture are attributed to the

Plague,

Plague, is sufficiently and thorowly expressed, what the quality and manner of the same is. Now the Plague is called *The hand of God*, 2 Sam. 24. *The word of God*, 1 Chron. 21. and is also signified by the name of *Arrows*, *Ps.* 31. & 90. Therefore it cometh not of Infection: when as neither Hand, nor Sword, nor Arrow, woundeth by Infection. But besides that, peradventure I might worthily call into doubt, whether all these testimonies alledged deny this Argument also; for in another place, as *Psalm* 17. *David* calleth his Enemies the *hand of God*, who by natural means assaulted him. And when as the hand of God is said to have made us, Natural generation is not left out; and it is manifest, that in the Scripture all evils, and punishments whatsoever God sendeth unto Mankinde, using either ordinary Laws of Nature only, or else using the service of Angels, are called *Arrows*. I demand moreover, what they call the quality and manner of the Disease? They will say, The nature thereof it self: But I say by those metaphorical terms of *hand*, *sword*, *arrow*, is no more signified of what manner or quality this Disease is in it self, than what is Hail or the Scabb, when God is said with a stretched out hand to have smitten *Ægypt*: And to be short, what is the force and nature of every Disease, when as in the additions of the Law, they are reckoned up amongst the Curses which God would send upon them? What then? surely then it belongeth unto the Physicians to search out the nature of Diseases, so far as they depend upon the laws of Nature; which we often see by them performed with such good success and certainty, that they can foreshew both them, and what issue they are likely to come unto. But concerning Supernatural and Divine causes of Sickness and other Miseries, those do Divines declare, teaching, That we must mount far above Nature, and all things appertaining unto Nature, when with our Prayers we deal about the avoiding and removing of them far away from us; for the true and principal cause of them is our Sins, wherewith God being provoked, doth raise and stir up against us all these inferiour Causes, to be revenged on Mankinde with just punishments. I therefore say, that it is an absurd and fond thing, to confound these things, so far severed asunder, and distinguished by their most diverse, yet not contrary ends, but onely such as are placed, the one under the other. And because that in this Argument they contend, that the Plague therefore is not infectious, for that it is often called the hand, and sword, and arrow of God, I demand of them, whether the Leprosie were not the hand of God? and whether it were not therefore infectious; and the rather, because it was infectious, whether therefore the Leprous were not commanded to depart aside from the rest that were clean? I demand this also, If there be no evil in the City, which the Lord doth not, whether at this day, notwithstanding, the foul black spotty and scurvy Leprosie called the *Elephantiasis* be not accounted infectious. And I would gladly ask of them which

finde fault with our going aside in the Plague time, whether they think that those which are infected with it, are to be suffered in the Common company and society of men? And if they suppose that they are to be suffered, why they declaim not, and cry out against them also by whom they are shut out? if not, and think them to be avoided for fear of the Infection, why without all exceptions do they blame those that shun the infections of the Plague, as the most hurtful to all persons? But they will peradventure deny that kinde of Leprosie to be the hand of God: Let us speak of the Pox, whether it be the *French*, or the *Spanish*, I would to God it were not also the *English*, That it is a punishment sent of God for Whoredom, which in these times is accounted as a sportive recreation; I think there is no man which dareth to deny that it is indeed the hand, sword, or arrow of God, which striketh Whoremongers. But is it not therefore infectious? And doth not a Whore even infect many with this disease, who again bewray one another? So that this most filthy Sickness is gotten, not onely with lying together, but also by breathing and handling, and is sucked out by Infants from their Nurses Breasts; and the Nurses get this Disease by giving suck unto the Infant, which is is either conceived by an unclean Father, or born of an unclean Mother: Thsoe Arguments also are therefore such, as do indeed need no confutation. Without all question it is absurd and against all reason to think, that there are immediately (as they say) rather sent unto every several man so many several Plagues, than the kinde it self of the Disease, by the which one corrupteth another by Infection: For whether God kill at one stroak, or whether, as it fell out unto the *Midianites*, he strike them down by one wounding another, whomsoever he hath appointed to die, what difference is there? Neither concerning what we have in hand is there any difference, whether any man be slain with the Dart of God himself, or the Infection of another.

Let us now come unto that which they alledge concerning Second causes, which they deny to be any certain placing of the Stars, or corruption of the Aire: Neither will the Physicians have any Plague or Infection to grow of those Causes. But if we grant this, and imagine that all Natural causes of the Plague are by them rehearsed, they must tell me, Why they shut out all these at once, insomuch that they will have them to have but small skill in Scriptures, who impute the plague (next after God) to these Causes? Because, say they, that the Holy Scriptures bear Record, that the Plague is sent by Angels, as *Psalm* 88. 1. 1 *Chron* 21. *Ezech.* 9. also in the History of *Zennacherib*, and in the *Revelation*, where there is mention made of a most noysom Ulcer; for, say they, that which God sendeth by Angels is not of Natural causes. I grant that, so far as concerneth the Angels themselves, who I yield are not reckoned among Natural

inſtruments : But what hinders, God ſo commanding, the Natural cauſes themſelves to be ſtirred up by the Angels? For ſurely it cannot be doubted that they, both the good and the bad, do ſtir up the minde of man after a certain ſort, what kinde of moving ſoever it be, when as Satan is ſaid to have entred into the heart of *Judas*, (unleſs we ſhall peradventure ſay, that the Good Angels have ſomewhat leſs power than the Bad) and that alſo is manifeſt by the Story of *Achab*, and by the efficacy and power of the Spirits of Errour. And who can deny that the will of man is to be reckoned amongſt the very Chiefeſt cauſes of Mens actions? But if the will of Man be not debarred from the Miniſtery of Angels, why ſhall we think that other Natural cauſes muſt needs by the ſame be taken away? *Moſes* ſtretching forth his Rod, raiſed up Lice, and innumerable ſorts of Flyes, brought out upon the ſuddain fearful Hayl, and ſtruck the *Ægyptians* with moſt noyſom Boyles and Botches. And this Miniſtry of *Moſes* was doubtleſs altogether as extraordinary, as the Miniſtry of Angels. But did not therefore the Lice and Flies come of Rottenneſs, the Hayl of Vapours growing together on the ſudden by reſtraint of the contrary, and the Boyles and Botches alſo of corruptions of the Humors? Satan receiving a Grant from God, by a ſuddain raiſing of the Winde, and by throwing abroad the Fire from Heaven overthrew, and burnt the Houſe of *Job*, together with all his Children. But doth it therefore follow that this came to paſs without any Natural cauſes ſtepping in between? Or ſhall we not rather ſay, that thoſe Princes of the Air (as the Apoſtle, not without cauſe, calleth them) made in a moment, thoſe indeed natural impreſſions of the Air? The Devil ſendeth the Godly to Priſon, *Revel.* 2. 10. But by Tyrants and Perſecutors of the Church. In the ſame Book, *cap.* 6. *verſ.* 8. The pale Horſe on whom Death the Rider ſitteth, receiveth power to kill with the Sword, Famine, and Peſtilence, and ſending of wilde Beaſts : Here, if we ſhall by that Rider underſtand an Angel, why ſhall we not aſwell ſay, that he uſed Natural matter to cauſe the Plague and Famine, as a Sword and Wilde beaſts, when themſelves are alſo natural inſtruments? and afterwards, *cap.* 9. *v.* 1. The Angels are commanded to ſtand in the four quarters of the Earth, and to keep back the Windes, that they hurt not the Sea and the Land with blowing. Whereof followeth, that at the Commandment of God, the Windes are in like manner ſent forth by them; from the which doubtleſs it is manifeſt, that many Infections of the Air, and chiefly infection, doth proceed. So that Natural cauſes, whether they be moved by little and little of their own force planted in them by Nature, or otherwiſe beyond Order, God ſo commanding, they be in a moment carried to their effects, they are natural, and ſo far forth are their effects alſo worthily judged natural, which no man of reaſon can deny. For if there come in no Natural cauſes in the Plague, thoſe whom

the Plague hath touched; doubtleſs they cannot be at all eaſed, much leſs be healed by Natural remedies. And to prove this to be moſt falſe, experience and very ſenſe doth demonſtrate; yet I profeſs my ſelf to be one of thoſe which doe ſo far deteſt the ſuperſtitious judicious Aſtrology, of Caſters of Nativities, and all other ſuch like predictions, that I could wiſh the old Statutes of Princes concerning thoſe things were renewed, and ſtreightly to be obſerved. But to take from the divers concourſes of the Stars, the natural Conſtitutions of the Air, and ſuch effects as depend thereupon in our Bodies; as if the Stars were onely placed in their Spheres to be looked upon, or for difference of times, I think to be no ſign of Judgement, but rather of a perverſe Stubbornneſs, when as the Husbandmen have a daily knowledge of this, and the Tempeſts do ſpeak the ſame; and that the thing it ſelf doth prove, that the temperature and diſtemperature, and even Infection it ſelf in ſome meaſure may be foretold by skilfull Aſtrologers. But now ſhould we grant, that thoſe Plagues, the example whereof are taken out of holy Scripture, were ſent by Angels, and therefore to have been without Infection; why ſhould it be leſs abſurd and againſt Reaſon to conjecture and reſolve, that no Plague is ſent by Angels, than to hold that no Hayl, no Showres, no Lightning is made by the courſe of Nature? becauſe that in many places of the Scriptures we read, that by the miniſtry of Angels it hath both hayled, and that moſt rough and bluſtring windes have blown, and that it hath horribly thundred. But, ſay they, thoſe examples of the Plague by Angels are ſet forth unto us for example, that thereby we may learn rightly to judge of Middle cauſes, and of the Original of the Plague.

Verily who will deny, that what things ſoever are written, are therefore written that by them we ſhould be inſtructed, and that all things which are mentioned in the holy Scriptures, of the miniſtry of Angels not onely of the Plague, but alſo of Famine and other Calamities, both to deſtroy the wicked, and alſo to correct and exerciſe the good, doth bring unto us great profit, that we may learn both to fear and love God, who is not tyed unto the laws of Nature, as the *Stoick Philoſophers* have thought; and hath certain inſtruments of his Judgements more fearful even than thoſe which are perceived by our ſenſes. But hereby is not concluded that which thou wouldſt have, namely, That thus we are taught, that there are no Natural cauſes uſed by Angels in the performance of the Commandments of God. The Scripture affordeth us examples of Plague ſent upon men, making no mention of Angels; and thoſe againſt whom I diſpute, do grant, that it was the Plague of which *Ezekias* was ſick, yet is he not ſaid to have been ſtricken by Angels. God doth often by *Moſes* and other Prophets threaten the Plague unto Sinners, neither is there any doubt but that theſe threatnings were not in vain; yet doth he not

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where recite that he will alwayes ſend them by Angels. The *Pſalmiſt* ſeemeth in certain Pſalmes to ſhew that he was taken with the Plague, whom notwithſtanding we never read to have ſmitten with any ſore, or wound given by the Angels. All theſe things therefore, unleſs I be very much deceived, make nothing at all to the taking away of the contagious air, the Second cauſe of this Sickneſs.

But this alſo which they ſet down, upon what reaſon I know not how grounded: They ſay, that the Plague is ſent unto men by the ſingular and eſpecial providence of God; and what is here which may not be affirmed of every thing which cometh to paſſe in the world? for, as he ſaith, not ſo much as a Sparrow falleth to the earth without the providence of God, and the hairs of our head are numbred; which providence, if it be ſtretched unto ſingular things, doubtleſs it is in ſuch ſort univerſal in the general, that it is alſo ſingular in the ſingular. They ſay moreover, that ſo often as the Plague reigneth in the World, that all thoſe are kept from this Infection whom God hath appointed to preſerve alive; and that unto the others all places are infectious, though they be never ſo far from thoſe which are ſick of the Plague. And they adde further and ſay, why then do we fear Infection? Is it not a fond thing to fear that which is not? I for my part cannot diſcern how theſe things can hang together; for how can all places be infectious to any man, if there be no Infection? unleſs peradventure they put it to be the Caſe. But it cannot by any means be truly gathered by certainty of Gods providence that the Plague is not infectious; therefore this Argument runneth beyond the Queſtion propounded.

Beſides, ſhall we think that the number of thoſe which ſhall dye, is more certain as often as God ſendeth the Plague, than when he caſteth other Darts? Now if they offend not againſt the providence of God, (who leaving, as it is meet, things unknown unto us, to the good will and pleaſure of himſelf) who do uſe remedies of Phyſick, both preſervative and ſanative, to keep away Sickneſs, and alſo to heal when it cometh; why ſhall we do the like alſo in the heat of the Plague? As therefore God hath appointed ſome which ſhall not die of the Plague, ſo alſo hath he appointed Remedies, by which, ſo far as in them lieth, men may avoid the Plague. And it is one and the ſame providence of God in all kind of diſeaſes with which he hath ordained by an unchangeable Decree what ſhall come to paſs, although the natures of the diſeaſes differ never ſo much in themſelves. Now among the chief remedies and proviſions in Phyſick againſt Infection, that going aſide in due ſeaſon is worthily reckoned, the very nature and ſignification of the word *Contagion* doth declare: although neither all be ſave which fly, neither all die which tarry. God without all doubt when he ſent a Famine into *Ægypt* and the Regions thereabouts, had determined who ſhould die in that ſcarcity; yet for all this *Joſeph* ceaſeth not with his

best diligence and most wise counsel to provide for the *Ægyptians*: The which things the Churches in the time of *Claudius* the Emperour also did, when as they understood by *Agabus* the Prophet that a Famine should shortly come. The Lord also knew who should dye in that most cruel war of the *Assyrians* in the dayes of *Ezekias*, and yet both *Ezekias* and the Prophet *Esay* himself secure themselves within the walls of the City: what should I say more? when as *Paul* knew assuredly, that neither he himself, neither any of those which were with him should perish in the shipwrack, yet said he to the Mariners who were preparing to fly out of the ship, *Ye cannot be saved unless these tarry.* Christ also, though he well knew that his hour was not yet come, yet did he more than once withdraw himself when the *Jews* sought to kill him.

Finally, that which they take for most certain, namely, that *happening* or *chance* is repugnant unto the *sure* and *stedfast Decree of God*; which notwithstanding it maketh not much to the matter, yet who will grant it them? we call those happening or chancing Causes, which of their own nature may fall out unto either part; if any man should take them out of the nature of things, I know not whether he should have any man of a right Judgment to hold with him. They say out of St. *Augustine*, *That the will of God is the necessity of things*; I grant so far as pertaineth unto the end and effects of the Causes themselves: But as St. *Augustine* saith very well, *It followeth not, that though all things which God hath decreed shall come to pass, must needs come to pass, that therefore they come to pass of necessary Causes*; like as the *Stoicks* did falsely conclude, and the same may be proved by most certain and most plain examples: For do we not believe that Christ had indeed Man's bones; and therefore such as of their own nature might at any time have been broken; and yet indeed they could not be broken, for that it was otherwise decreed by God: Therefore by hap and chance, concerning their own nature they were not broken; when as notwithstanding they were such as might have been broken, and yet by God's Decree they remained of necessity unbroken. Again, that Christ from the very time that he took upon him our Human nature was indued with a Mortal body, all Christians do confesse; therefore of his own nature he might have been slain by *Herod*, with the other little Children; but by God's Decree he could not: Therefore that he was not then slain, fell out by *hap* and *chance*, if you consider the nature of his Body, when as it might have chanced otherwise: But, by God's Decree, he could no more be slain by *Herod*, than the will of God could be changed. Christ when he was carried to be crucified, was then undoubtedly of such health, that he needed not at that time to have died; he died therefore by chance, if you do consider the cause of his Natural death; and yet he died of necessity, if you look to the unchangeable appointment of his Father,

Father, becauſe his hour was come : and withall he died willingly, becauſe he laid down his Life for us. Thus far therefore is neither *chance* nor *will* repugnant unto the moſt certain Decree of God.

There remaineth one Argument taken from Experience, which in ſhew ſeemeth very ſtrong, yet is it of no force to take away Infection, I mean to prove the Plague not to be infectious. If, ſay they, the Plague come of Natural cauſes, or of ſome certain Conſtellation, or of corrupt Air, then ſhould all they doubtleſs be infected which dwell under the ſame Conſtellation, or breath in the ſame corrupt Air; which is found to be falſe; for even reaſon it ſelf doth prove the falſhood of this Argument : For who is ſo unskilfull that knoweth not, that one and the ſame Cauſe doth not always operate alike, much leſs equally; nay, that the effects are divers, according unto the diverſity of the matter it worketh upon? one and the ſelf-ſame North-winde doth not equally annoy men with Cold; every man therefore ſeeth how weak this reaſon is. But let us grant, that in ſome place every man of himſelf is apt to receive the corrupt air, yet may many things happen why the ſame effect in all would not follow; as for example, one man taketh a Preſervative medicine, another doth not; one forthwith uſeth a good medicine, another very late, or never. Laſtly, that which is the principal point is to be conſidered; That Almighty God doth govern Natural cauſes and their effects, as it pleaſeth him; So that hence it cometh to paſs, that Infection toucheth not every one which is in danger of it, as it is written *Pſal.* 91. 6. Neither yet is it deadly unto every one that it hath infected; like as Poyſon alſo drunken is not, as it is written *Mark* 16. 18. Therefore this Argument alſo is not of force to prove there is no infection in the Plague, becauſe that many which keep company with thoſe that are ſick of the Plague are not taken; and contrariwiſe, they that are abſent are infected : As if the poyſon of a Viper were not deadly, becauſe that *Paul* being bitten of one felt no harm at all, *Acts* 28.5. And thus far concerning *Infection*.

Now we muſt treat of *going aſide*; for ſo I had rather call it, than *flying*; though I think it the part of a Wiſe-man to fly peril with reaſon. There are ſome therefore, which do without exception finde fault with going aſide for the Plague, that they count it a very heynous offence, though they think that thoſe which tarry ought not to uſe raſhneſs. There are on the other ſide which hold that every man, ſo ſoon as the Plague cometh, ought to provide for himſelf, having no regard, or but very ſmall of the fellowſhip and duties which Chriſtian Charity doth command. Now I for my part do diſſent from both theſe, and eſpecially from the latter, as having moſt lawful cauſes: But ere I ſet down my own judgement in this Controverſie, let us hear theſe diſputing the one againſt the

other

other. Thus therefore they which think it not lawful to fly, do first of all Philosophically dispute against those that hold it not lawfull to tarry at all, they alledge out of *Plato* his *Gorgias*, That it is fooliſhneſſe to fear Death; and that he cannot seem to be a temperate person which flyeth Death, becauſe it proceedeth of too much delight in life; nor yet to be a juſt man, for that he which in the time of the Plague provideth for himſelf by running away, doth yield neither to God nor Man his due. To theſe Reaſons they ſet down others taken out of the holy Scriptures, as That they think not well of the providence of God, by whoſe unchangeable Decree the courſe of man's life is limitted: That they diſtruſt God, and believe not his promiſe, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed*: That they are void of all Charity, nay, and more, of all Natural pitty and affection: That they tempt God after the example of the *Iſraelites*, *Exod.* 17. 3. & *Pſal.* 78. 18. appointing God by what manner, time, and place, and by what means he may ſave them: That they love not God from their hearts; for being enamoured and in love with Earthly goods, they neglect and are careleſs of the heavenly: That they fear death too much, for that they ſet themſelves againſt the will of God, which is always good: That they think themſelves ſtronger than God, and that they can eſcape his hand: That they do openly break the law of Chriſt, and of Nature; by which they are commanded to do unto others as they would be done unto themſelves: That they do, and teach that which no Chriſtian hath done, but that which hath often been done by the Heathens. And thus much ſay the firſt: unto whom theſe later have nothing to anſwer, who under pretence of ſaving their lives, perſwade flying away without exception. Wherefore if theſe things alledged againſt thoſe which do in ſuch ſort fly the Plague, ſo that they in any thing ſwerve from the Rules and Laws of Godlineſſe and Charity; I hold with their Adverſaries, and count them worthy of all blame, which fly from thence whither they ſhould rather run, if they had but the leaſt ſpark of humanity. But if theſe Reaſons be wreſted againſt thoſe, who being moved with juſt cauſes go aſide, and keep that mean by which they let paſſe no part of their duty either towards God or their Neighbours, (which we ſay may oftentimes be done,) we affirm, that all theſe Arguments, in ſhew never ſo plauſible and ſtrong, to be of no force or value, if the matter it ſelf be diligently weighed and conſidered. For anſwer to their firſt Reaſon, albeit the Decree of God be unchangeable, and that his eternal providence hath ſet the unremovable bounds of our lives; Yet doth not this take away the ordinary and lawful means to ſave our Lives; no, not although a man have received an anſwer from God of prolonging his life, as we have ſhewed by the manifeſt example of Saint *Paul*, *Acts* 27. 14. and

Anſwer to the former Reaſons if ſimply alledged againſt ſuch who upon any manner of occaſion go aſide.

and 31. much leſſe that we may not uſe theſe means, when it is yet hid from us, what God from everlaſting hath decreed concerning the prolonging and ending of our life. Moreover, why ſhould he be ſaid to diſtruſt the promiſes of God, who doth follow the wayes appointed by God, to avoid Evils, that notwithſtanding he dependeth wholly upon God; unleſſe peradventure we can any where finde in the holy Scriptures this Commandment expreſly written, *When the Plague rageth; flye not away.* And amongſt them, preſervative Remedies are to be reckoned; and amongſt theſe, *going aſide* in due time; the like alſo, as the very name of *Contagion* doth manifeſt. And this alſo is plain, That he doth not onely not offend againſt Chriſtian Charity, neither yet tempt God, who in ſuch manner by going aſide doth avoid the Plague, ſo that in the mean time he let paſſe no act of Piety towards God, or of Charity towards his Neighbour; That on the contrary, unleſſe he perform theſe Duties, he may be thought to provoke the wrath of God againſt himſelf, and to be worſe than an Infidel, as being one that raſhly puts himſelf in danger of deadly Infection, without any care of himſelf, or his.

The fifth and ſixth Allegation is not any whit truer, They love not God, ſay they; and, gaping after earthly things, they care not for heavenly; Becauſe they which love God deſire nothing more than to be with him, which falleth out unto us by death; but they on the contrary fear nothing more. Then truly he, who in loving hath onely his laſt end before another, for his own profit-ſake to enjoy the thing he loveth, by what means ſoever it be, ſhall worthily be judged to love himſelf rather than his Friends. Therefore the ſelf-ſame perſon which deſireth to be looſed and to be with Chriſt, wiſheth alſo, for his Brethrens ſake, to be ſeparated as a thing accurſed, *Acts* 9. 3. Neither doth he deliver up his Life into the hands of them that lay in wait for him, appealing unto *Caſar*, *Acts* 25. 11. and giveth thanks for his health reſtored unto him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 11. That *David* alſo doth not ſo much flye *Saul* and *Abſalon*, as *Death*, being notwithſtanding a Worſhipper of God; That he and *Ezekias* do expreſly pray againſt Death; therefore whoſoever flyeth Death is not raſhly to be judged or cenſured not to love God: as contrariwiſe, whoſoever deſireth Death is not to be thought to love God; but he onely, who lawfully and with a good Conſcience, obeying the will of God, prepareth himſelf either to ſuffer or avoid death. The like alſo is to be judged of the fear of Death, that is, if it be grounded upon good reaſon and moderately, it is not onely not to be condemned, but alſo to be allowed as a Preſerver of life graſted in us by God; Therefore that fear of Evil is condemned by Philoſophers, which is contrary to Fortitude, and calleth us from that which every one of us oweth unto each other, and out of holy Scripture, that Fear which is againſt Faith and Charity: For it is one thing to take clean away Natu-

ral affections, (which no man could ever possibly do) and another to moderate and rule them; the which the Philosophers very well teach ought to be done, but how it may be done, the Word of God, by the Holy Ghost, doth onely declare. And concerning those things which they cite out of *Tertullian*, they shoot partly beyond his Mark, when as he speaketh of flying onely in Persecution, and partly with the great consent of the Church, are reckoned amongst his blemishes, as one that in this Argument was carried beyond the Butt. No man questionless that is godly, and of right understanding, ever condemned the going aside of *Jacob*; no man ever condemned *David* flying the fury of *Saul*, and conspiracy of *Absolon*; nor *Elias* avoiding by his flight the rage of *Jezabel*; no man ever condemned the going aside of *Athanasius* more than once: neither do we here fly either unto the Agonie of Christ, or unto that of *Matthew* 10. 23. *If they persecute you in one City, fly unto another*: which places I confesse are of some not fitly alledged; for as touching the fears of Christ, they are grounded upon a peculiar consideration, and are not to be drawn into example; when as there is handled of the mysterie of our Salvation, the parts whereof Christ alone both could and did take upon him, in the which he did see that fearful wrath of his Father, and indeed felt it, bearing the Punishment due unto our Sins: we contrariwise are not at our Deaths tryed with the same fears, because we have the Father appeased with us, and, through Faith, behold Life in Death it self. And that saying of Christ is doubtlesse no Command of flying away; but on the contrary, admonisheth faithful Pastors, that being feared with no threatnings, if they be driven out of one place, they hasten unto another; the which afterwards we see diligently to have been done by the Apostles.

But let us hear something else of more weight peradventure; There can be nothing sent of God (say they) but that which is good; nay, there is nothing Good, but that which cometh of God: But the Plague is sent of God, therefore it is good; if not of its own nature, yet in respect of the good end; namely, to punish our Sins, to try our Faith, to drive us to Repentance, and to bring forth Hypocrites to light. Who therefore (say they) can deny, but that They fly the thing that is good, which fly the Plague, by the which God bringeth all these things to passe? Again, that which God sendeth upon all, that is to say, upon any one Church or Kingdom; as for example, the Plague, the same he will have born of all; how is it to be fled from? Therefore they set themselves against the will of God, which fly the Plague; nay, they fly in vain, because it is in vain to strive against the will of God; but what could have been more vainly said than these things; For to let passe the falshood that lieth in these words, *Good* and *Evil*, in this Argument, to what end I pray you should they enter into this disputation concerning the nature of things? There is no Evil

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(that is to say, no calamitie or punishment) in the City, which the Lord hath not done, saith the Prophet. Why therefore shall we call Famine, Pestilence, War, and such like, Good? Because, say they, they fall out unto the good of the Godly. I grant it, because the Lord fetcheth Light out of Darkness: Yea, but the Godly are instructed by Sinne it self. Are Sinnes I pray you therefore good, and doth he which resisteth them resist God? To be short, who seeth not, that to pray unto God against things which of their own nature are hurtful unto us, and withall to use just and lawful remedies to avoid them, if it may be; So that we commit the end to God, to be a far other thing than it is, or that we should hope to withstand God, or by any means to escape his Judgements? *Abraham* himself, *Isaac* and *Jacob* did fly Hunger, the which notwithstanding was sent of God; who yet cannot be said to have fled the thing that was good, or to have sinned: As for that which they so greatly stand upon, namely, That those which fly the Plague do break that immoveable Precept which Humanitie it self teacheth, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye the same unto them*; as it is worthily turned upon them which do in such sort fly the Plague, or any other danger, that then neglect the Duties of a Christian: So doth it in no case make against them who shun the Plague by going aside, unlesse they may be judged to have neglected to perform those Duties which they owe both unto their Country and to their Neighbour. And truly, I do marvel that those who without exception do condemn going aside, as being of it self repugnant unto Charity, doe not consider, that Charity doth less require that we provide for the whole, than that we help those that are taken with that Sickness.

Finally, They say that as many as fly the Plague, do that which no Christian ever did, when as there is no example thereof in the holy Histories.

I answer, That this is too deceitful an Argument, when as it is apparent that in the holy Scriptures is not set down what every one hath done; and that in many the general Rules of Doctrine, there is sufficient to determine those things whereof we have no Commandment, nor any particular Example; and that it is without doubt that it is not set down how often the People hath been visited with the Plague, neither yet how every man behaved himself in the Plague. But they say they have altogether contrarie counsel in the holy Scriptures; for that *David* doth call us back unto the Tabernacle of the Most Highest, *Psal.* 91. as though he fled not unto God, which lawfully useth going aside: But yet, say they, *David* did not fly that very sore Plague whereof mention is made, 2 *Sam.* 24. neither removed his Houshold unto any other place. I grant this; but how many peculiar circumstances do forbid us to make of that a general Conclusion? for he himself was the cause of that Plague, and deservedly

ſo far forth troubled, that he is ready even with his own deſtruction to redeem the Publick calamitie; further, when as this Plague continued not above three daies at the moſt, what place was there left him to take advice or to fly unto? whither ſhould he have fled, when the Plague was hot in all his Dominion, and yet is ſaid not at all, or very little, to have touched the Chief Citie it ſelf? Again, they ſay *Eſaias* fled not from *Ezekias* being ſick of the Plague: As if we held, that the Shepherds with a good Conſcience, might willingly, and of their own accord, leave their Sheep; Yea, and what if I ſhould take exception that *Eſaias* came not to *Ezekias* but by the ſpecial command of God? for ſo doth the Hiſtorie bear Record. But, ſay they, *Jeremiah* alſo and *Baruch*, with other godly men, fled not out of the Citie being beſiedged of the *Chaldees*, though a great part of the People died aſwell of the Plague as of Famine; Neither do we ſay that we may worthily ſhun the Plague by going aſide, if we depart from that which we owe unto God, our Country, and every of our Neighbours: But I cannot but wonder, that thoſe which alledge this example of *Jeremiah* have forgotten that he was taken at the Gate of the Citie, when he aſſayed to get out, *Jer.* 37. 12.

Laſt of all, they bring a notable example of the Church of *Alexandria*, out of the ſeventh Book of *Euſebius*, *Cap.* 20. as though we did allow the going aſide either of all, or in all places, and times, or do not teach that ſuch Conſtancy and Charitie ought both to be prayſed, and alſo followed, ſo that a General Rule be not made thereof; for *Euſebius* doth not ſay that every one, but that very many of the Chriſtians did it.

Therefore to conclude theſe things, there hath been nothing yet alledged whereby the Plague hath been proved either not to be infectious, or that going aſide to avoid Infection is without exception to be condemned; for that going aſide is one of the Chief among Natural remedies and proviſions in Infectious diſeaſes, Reaſon and Experience it ſelf doth teach. For doubtleſſe the word *Contagion* in it ſelf doth aloud ſpeak this, That thoſe things which are leſs far off are more in danger of it; and it is daily to be ſeen, that by removing in due time unto more healthful places, many have been preſerved; which if any man will except againſt, ſhould have been ſaved if they had tarried ſtill at home, becauſe God had ſo decreed: What then ſhall he ſay, who agreeth not alſo unto the other ſhunnings and remedies of all perils? Therefore we ought to laugh at, as needleſs, not only Phyſick, but alſo all prudence and wiſedome, which is uſed in avoiding dangers of all ſorts; neither ſhould there be any difference between Raſhneſs and Diſcretion, between Fortitude and Boldneſs. But the matter is far otherwiſe, becauſe like as God by his everlaſting and unchangeable Decree hath appointed the courſe of our Life, ſo hath he

alſo

also ordained Middle causes, which we should use to preserve our Lives withall.

It now remaineth that I shew you when it may be convenient to go aside; for as in other indifferent things, so also may a man use going aside both well and ill: and so far am I from perswading the same to every man without exception, that on the contrary I confesse that they offend much lesse, who when they might otherwise, with a good Conscience, withdraw themselves, had rather yet tarry; and to venture and endanger their Lives, rather than that they might seem to have forsaken their Neighbour, or Family. I confesse, I say, that these offend much lesse than those, who being carried away with too much distrust, or with unmeasurable fear of death, forgetting and neglecting all duties of Humanitie, have this only before their eyes, *Away quickly, afar off, long ere you return again.* Men surely most worthy to be thrust out of all company of men, the bonds whereof they break all to pieces. Now what in this point may be observed, I think may this way be determined.

First of all I think it is to be proivded, That every man do summon himself unto the Judgement-seat of God, unto the Plague as the coming of news of the wrath of God, condemning himself, that he may be acquitted by him, and that withall he weigh with himself, that he is called to stand forth and plead his own Cause, and that this Rod cannot be avoided by change of place, but of manners; and that if he must die, that this is decreed for the good of them which die, forasmuch as they are blessed which die in the Lord.

Another Point is, That no man either Go aside, or tarry with a doubtful Conscience: But when as he shall have learned out of the Word of God what his Dutie is; that commending himself unto God, he continue constantly therein.

And although that in so great varietie of Circumstances, Rules for every singular thing cannot be set down; yet is it no hard matter to give certain General Precepts agreeable unto the Word of God, by the which, as by a certain Rule, singular Cases may afterwards (as they say) be tried. Let them therefore which think to tarry, know, that it is the Commandment of God, *Thou shalt not Kill*, and that therefore neither their own, nor the Lives of any belonging or depending on them, are rashly to be put in danger of deadly Infection. Let them on the other side, which think to Go away, know, that no man ought to have so great regard either of himself, or of his Family, that he forget what one oweth unto his Countrie, and Fellow-Citizens. To be brief, what he oweth unto another, whether they be bound by the common bond of Humanitie and Societie, or by any other kinde of Friendship; for Love seeketh not the things which are her own: Wherefore, I confess, that I cannot see by what reason at all any

man is forbid to depart, which either by reason of Age, or of Sickness, past hope of Recovery, cannot help others; and if they tarry, they may therefore seem onely to be stayed, that they may die, to the great losse of the Common-wealth; for as their Cruelty can never enough be blamed, which thrust them out of their Cities, especially if they be of the poor sort; so both the pious natures of Parents in time providing for the preservation and life of theirs, without prejudice or hurt to any man, seemeth unto me to be greatly commended; And also the providence of the Magistrates is much to be praysed, where their care shall be extended (without dammage to the Common-welfare) to see that those weak ones, as seed-plots of Citizens, be well looked unto.

And here cometh in the way that General bond, wherewith Man is especially bound unto Man, and that without taking away of Humanitie it self, cannot be broken; There is also another Bond binding every Citizen unto his Country and Citie But both these Bonds I affirm to be natural and universal, that every one must have regard of his Estate, and Calling; for some serve in Publick Offices, either Civil, or the Ministry; the rest are Private persons; And the bonds of Private persons between themselves are manifold, the which Nature it self knitteth, and Christian Godliness bindeth; the which, unlesse they be discerned asunder, that every man may know what his Dutie is in all things, it must needs follow that Confusion shall bear the sway in all things, under a shew of Order; Therefore let Man help Man; Citizen Citizen, that needeth his help, according to his power, and let him not think of Going aside, by which it may justly appear likely unto him to come to pass, that by this means some bodie shall be ill looked unto; much more that through contempt of any man, or of an overthwart fear of Death, he depart not any whit from the dutie of Humanitie, but when as without the neglect of his Dutie and Publick offence, he may be careful both for himself, and his, by going aside. I see no cause why he may not onely not do it, but also why he is not bound to do it; yet, lest in this case, any man by flattering of himself, might sinne against his Neighbour, it is the dutie of a Christian Magistrate to provide, that those things which either breed or nourish the Plague, so far as they may, be taken away, and that regard may be had of those that be visited with this Sickness, that All benot driven to be careful for All. But how they that serve in any Publick Civil Office may leave their Charge in the time of the Plague, I do not see; and for faithful Pastors to forsake but one poor Sheep at that time when he most of all needeth Heavenly comfort, it were too shamefull, nay too wicked a part. As touching Private persons, their bonds of Friendship and Amitie are divers and manifold; among these, this is the Chiefest, unto which also Natural conjunction of Blood (as God witnesseth) must give place, I mean the bond and tye of Wedlock; so that in my

judgement

judgement the Husband cannot with a good Conſcience go from the Wife or the Wife from the Husband, eſpecially if one of them be viſited with the Plague: And how much Parents do owe unto their Children, and Children to their Parents, Kinſmen to Kinſmen, the verie Laws of Nature declares, the which Chriſtian Charitie is ſo far off from letting looſe, that contrariwiſe it draweth them more and harder together: Yea, and for Servants to forſake their Maſters, or Maſters to look ſlenderly to their Servants being ſick (which cometh too often to paſs) who have made uſe of their Service when they were well, is Crueltie. Yet is not the bond of all theſe friendſhips alike or equal, and therefore that which is not ſo near muſt give place to the nearer, foraſmuch as many cannot be diſcharged at once.

Furthermore, as there is place alſo for forſaking amongſt thoſe which are preſent, unleſs they which tarry do their dutie; ſo heed is to be taken both of thoſe that are ſick, that they abuſe not the love of their Kindred and Friends, whilſt they are deſirous to have themſelves provided for: and alſo of thoſe which continue in doing their duties, that they caſt not themſelves raſhly into the danger of Infection, which is uſed to be done by ſome of deſperate boldneſs, rather than of true and Chriſtian judgement, who being wont to contemn thoſe that are ſick of other diſeaſes, doe viſit thoſe that are taken with the Plague, that they may ſeem to deſpiſe Death. And this conrempt of God's judgements, I ſhould leſs bear withall, than with the too much weakneſs of the fearful. But how others are affected and diſpoſed in the craving of the preſence of their Friends I know not, when as my ſelf being viſited with the Plague, and that divers of my Friends offered unto me all kinde of Courteſie, I ſuffered none to come unto me, leſt I might have been thought to have provided for my ſelf with the loſs of my Friends. But if in ſuch Calamities the Magiſtrate do not in time provide, as much as may be, both by ſuch lawful means as are not repugnant unto Chriſtian Charitie, that the Infection may be prevented, and alſo that the ſick of the Plague want nothing; he ſhall doubtleſs do very well both for the ſick & the whole, and ſhall take away many Queſtions, which in this Argument are wont to be raiſed: but this eſpecially muſt be agreed upon, that as our Sinnes are the chief and true cauſe of the Plague, ſo that this is the onely proper remedie againſt the ſame; if the Miniſters diſpute not of the Infection (which belongeth to Phyſicians) but by their Life and Doctrine ſtir up the People to earneſt Repentance, and Love, and Charitie one towards another.

FINIS.